

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00583 200927Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00

CIAE-00 (ISO) W

-----231717Z 058729 /15

O 200840Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7945

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0583

EXDIS

FROM WOODCOCK

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR US LA

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION VISIT TO LAOS

1. PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION RECEIVED WARM WELCOME FROM LAO OFFICIALS DURING BRIEF VISIT TO VIENTIANE. LPDR PROVIDED GOOD ARRANGEMENTS, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND PROGRAM FOR COMMISSION'S STAY. OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS WERE FRIENDLY AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT LAO WERE TRYING TO CREATE A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR VISIT. FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD MARCH 19, WITH LPDR DELEGATION HEADED BY NOUPHAN SITHPASAY, SECRETARY OF STATE (I.E. VICE MINISTER) FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INCLUDING FONMIN CHEF DE CABINET SOUBANH SRITHIRATH. ON MARCH 20 COMMISSION RECEIVED BY DEPUTY PREMIER/FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH AND PRESIDENT SOUPHANOUVONG. LAO HOSTED DINNER AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR COMMISSION, STAFF, EMBASSY PERSONNEL, AND U.S. PRESS EVENING MARCH 19.

2. ON SUBSTANCE, HOWEVER, LAO WERE NOT PARTICULARLY FORTHCOMING IN MARCH 19 FORMAL TALKS. THEY CLOSELY LINKED PROVISION OF U.S. RECONSTRUCTION AID TO ANY LAO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 00583 200927Z

ACTION ON MIA'S. THEY DID STATE UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT NO LIVE AMERICANS WERE BEING HELD PRISONER IN LAOS. THEY CLAIMED ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN AT LEAST TWICE TO PEOPLE TO SEARCH FOR REMAINS AND INFO ON MIA'S BUT THAT NO INFORMATION HAD BEEN TURNED UP SO FAR. (IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF, MFA CHEF DE CABINET SAID THAT AFTER RECEIPT OF SECRETARY'S LETTER REGARDING

VISIT PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION, LAO HAD TRIED TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MIA BUT DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO DO SO BEFORE COMMISSION ARRIVED.) THEY SAID THEY WOULD ACCEPT DOCUMENTS FROM US TO HELP THEIR SEARCH. ON QUESTION OF IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH U.S. LAO WELCOMED COMMISSION VISIT AS INDICATION OF "NEW" ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM BY NEW ADMINISTRATION BUT SAID IMPROVEMENT DEPENDED ON U.S., PARTICULARLY CESSATION OF WHAT THEY ALLEGE IS U.S. SUPPORT FOR "REACTIONARY" FORCES CONDUCTING INSURGENCY AGAINST LPDR. THEY STUCK TO THIS IN FACE OF DENIALS BY WOODCOCK AND MANSFIELD. THEY ALSO CRITICIZED U.S. AID TO THAILAND AS "INDIRECT" SUPPORT OF LAO "REACTIONARIES" THERE.

3. WOODCOCK STATEMENT AT MARCH 19 MEETING STRESSED NEW ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH LAO AND HOPE THAT COMMISSION'S VISIT WOULD BE FIRST STEP IN THIS DIRECTION. HE EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE U.S. ATTACHES TO MIA ISSUE AND HOPED THAT TWO COUNTRIES COULD AGREE ON PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE. HE ASSURED LAO THAT U.S. HAS NO HOSTILE INTEREST TOWARD THEM AND PROMISED TO REPORT THEIR VIEWS BACK TO PRESIDENT.

4. IN MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRESIDENT MARCH 20, HOWEVER, LAO WARMED UP AT LEAST THE TONE OF THEIR POSITION NOTICEABLY. BOTH PHOUNE AND SOUPHANOUVONG EXPRESSED FEELING THAT PREVIOUS DAY'S TALKS HAD RESULTED IN IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING. THEY BOTH TOOK NOTE OF WOODCOCK'S STATEMENT THAT USG HAD NO HOSTILE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 00583 200927Z

INTENTION TOWARD LPDR. PHOUNE MADE BRIEF REFERENCE TO U.S. USING ITS INFLUENCE TO MODERATE THAI BEHAVIOR TOWARD LAOS BUT DID NOT PURSUE MATTER AT ANY LENGTH. PHOUNE SAID LPDR WILL DO UTMOST TO LOOK FOR INFO ON MIA'S AND ASKED FOR UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED BECAUSE OF LAO TERRAIN, ETC. PHOUNE DID NOT RAISE AID ISSUE AT ALL AND SOUPHANOUVONG NOTED IT ONLY IN PASSING. BOTH EXPRESSED SEVERAL TIMES THEIR FEELING THAT COMMISSION'S VISIT AND ATTITUDE OF NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION BODED WELL FOR IMPROVED U.S.-LAO RELATIONS.

5. IN BOTH MEETINGS WOODCOCK, FOR HIS PART, REITERATED THAT U.S. HAS NO HOSTILE INTENTIONS TOWARD LPDR AND DOES NOT SUPPORT THOSE WHO SEEK TO OVERTHROW LPDR EITHER FROM WITHIN OR OUTSIDE OF LAOS. HE PROMISED THAT "FRANK AND CLEAR" EXPOSITION OF LPDR POLICIES WHICH COMMISSION HAD RECEIVED WOULD BE CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT CARTER. WITH PHOUNE HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF FINDING SOLUTION TO MIA PROBLEM FOR BOTH HUMANI-

TARIAN REASONS VIS-A-VIS THE FAMILIES OF MISSING MEN
AND FOR POLITICAL REASONS TO REMOVE IT AS OBSTACLE
RAISED FOR POLITICAL REASONS TO REMOVE IT AS OBSTACLE
RAISED BY THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSED TO PROGRESS IN
IMPROVEMENT OF LAO-U.S. RELATIONS. HE SAID WE UNDER-
STOOD DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING MIA INFORMATION IN LAOS
BUT CITED NEED FOR OBTAINING AT LEAST SOME INFORMATION
IN ORDER TO AVOID IMPRESSION THAT LPDR IS REFUSING TO
COOPERATE AT ALL. HE WELCOMED WHAT WAS SAID BOTH DAYS
RE LAO PROMISE TO DO UTMOST, AND ALSO TOOK NOTE OF
CLEAR LAO STATEMENT THAT NO AMERICANS ARE BEING HELD
ALIVE IN LAOS. HE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT U.S. WISHED
TO SEE STABLE AND PROSPEROUS SOUTHEAST ASIA WHICH
INCLUDED BETTER U.S.-LAO RELATIONS.

6. WOODCOCK ALSO DELIVERED PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL
LETTER TO SOUPHANOUVONG, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 VIENTI 00583 200927Z

IT AND PROMISED TO REPLY PROBABLY LATER THROUGH
EMBASSY SINCE NOT ENOUGH TIME BEFORE COMMISSION LEFT.

7. COMMISSION ENDED VISIT BY HOSTING LUNCHEON FOR LAO
OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PHOUNE, JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE
FOR CLARK AIR BASE.
CORCORAN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MIA, FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESIDENTIAL MISSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VIENTI00583
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770099-0973
Format: TEL
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770341/aaaabjik.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 40895cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3054222
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION VISIT TO LAOS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, OVIP, US, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/40895cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009